

THE
Birth, Life and Death
 OF
 JOHN FRANK,



Printed by J. W. for J. Deaton at the
 Angel in Gilt-spur-street without
 Newgate.



THE
Birth, Life *and* Death
OF
JOHN FRANK,

And of the Pranks and Jests he
play'd, though a meer
Natural Fool.

READERS,

These pretty Jests you here will read,
Were from an Innocent indeed :
Such pretty Pranks were never known,
As oftentimes Jack Frank hath shown.
Some Men are fools only in show,
But this (a fool) all men did know :
Belov'd he was of every one,
And when he dy'd there was great moan.

Poor Jack is dead, but he hath left behind,
A Character which will be borne in mind.

Licensed according to Direc.

Printed by J. W. for J. Deaton at the
Angel in Gilt-spur-street without
Newgate:



The Epistle to the READER.

John Frank, the reputed Son of John Ward, was Born in Much Easton Parish in Essex, within three miles of Dunmow: He had no Friends to take care of him, his being a fool was the cause of his well being; for every one was in love with the sport which he made, and the unexpected answers which he would give, did much amaze all people. When he was grown to be of Mans stature, there was a worthy Knight who took him to keep, where he did many pretty and strange pranks, he was a comely person, and had a good Complexion; his Hair of a dark flaxen: He was of a middle stature, and good countenance; if his Tongue had not betray'd his foolery; no one would ever think, but that he had been a Wise man.

Here

Here follows now some very pleasant Stories of him.

THE Caterer, or Servant who bought the Provision into the House, went one day to the Market, to buy some choise Fish for his Masters Dinner, and took Jack the Fool with him to bring it home; and having bought it, he put it into a Basket, and gave it to the Fool, saying, Go home, Jack, quickly with the fish; Ay, says Jack; I will: so parting with the Fool, he went about some other business: Poor Jack marched towards home, but by the way he meets with a Boy who had a Mag-pye upon his Fist, the Boy perceivding by his Habit he was a Fool, asked him what he had in his Basket? Fish, says Jack? What Bird is that you have got, will you give it to me, saith Jack? It is a Parrot, says the Boy; And if you will give me your Basket

The mad Conceits

with fish. I will give you my Parrot ;
The Fool soon agreed to this motion,
and took the pay-pye, and home very
joyful y he went, but not come there
till four of the Clock in the Afternoon,
the Cook (who had fretted sufficiently
for want of the fish for his Masters
Dinner) met him in the tack yard :
You Rogue, saith he, where is the fish ?
O, says Jack, I have a fine Parrot
here, is not this a fine Parrot ? Sir-
rah, says the Cook, (smilingly) where
is the fish ? I gave it to the Boy, saith
Jack, for this Parrot, was not that
well done Mr. Cook ? The Cook and
the rest of the Company could not
forbear laughing, and said no more to
him.

How Jack and the Taylor lay together,
and how Jack one morning was found
set on stide a great high beam in the
Chamber, and the Taylor found dead in
his Bed, with his Neck broke.

This Night where Jack lived kept a
poor Taylor in the house, with
whom they lodged the Fool.

One morning they wondered that the
Cap.

Of John Frank.

Taylor nor Jack did not come down, one of the Servants went up, and finding the Chamber door fast, he called to them, but Jack only answered him; and not coming to the door, the servant ran down stairs again and called others of his fellows to go with him to see what the matter was, who breaking open the door, they found the Taylor dead in his Bed, with his neck broke, and the fool set astride upon a high beam where he could not come without help; they were much surprized, and asked Jack how this came to pass? The Devil, says Jack, did come up stairs, Clink, Clink, Clink, and opened our Chamber door, and came to my side; and I cry'd good Devil don't take me, take the Taylor, so the Devil went to the Taylor, and broke his Neck, and set me upon the beam. This was strictly examined by several Justices, and afterwards by the Bench at Chelmsford, but Jack was always in the same story, not adding or diminishing; and so continued till his dying day, and was never concerned at his Examination.

The mad Conceits

How Jack was accused by a Wench to be
the father of her Bastard.

A Wench being got with Child and
not well knowing who was the
father of it, she being had before a Ju-
stice of Peace and Examined, she laid
it to John Frank: so poor Jack was sent
for, the Justice asking him if he was
the father of that Wenches Child?
The fool was so innocent that he knew
not the meaning thereof, but stood sta-
ring and laughing, making one or other
by the hand that stood by.

The Justice then said unto him, Are
you Guilty or not Guilty Jack? I guil-
ty saith Jack; quitted all the Country
over: the Justice perceiving the poor
Soul did not understand his Examina-
tion, said to the Wench, Housewife, you
must seek another father for your Child;
So taking order for her punishment,
Jack was freed and went laughing a-
way; and also all the Company.

How Jack deceived a Sexton, and got in-
to a Church to Preach.

Ever

Every one was willing to humour this Fool, and one day Jack had a mind to be fine, and he desired a Servant who had a Sute to spare, to lend him a black Sute and Cloak; the man smiling, said unto him, what would you do with it, Sirrah? I must go and preach says Jack. The servant having a great mind to see what the Fool would do, consented to it: So Jack's Calve-skin Sute was plucked off, and the black one put on, with Stockings, Shooes, Band, Hat, Cloak and Gloves, all very suitable, his Hands and Face being washed clean, and his Head combed: he looked not like a Fool at all: when he was thus accoutred, the Servants asked him what he would do? I will go to Preach, saith he; they not believing that the Fool would attempt such a thing, but that it was some idle fancy, which he had many, gave him leave to go alone into the Park, and would not go with him for fear of spoiling the sport, imagining that they should hear by one or other some pretty Jest of him: But Jack was too cunning for them all,

The mad Conceits

all, and got him indeed to a Village about six miles off, and enquired for the Sertons House, which when he had found, he knocked at the door, the Serton himself chancing to come to open the door, and seeing as he thought a Minister, did make him a low reverence: Art thou the Serton, saith Jack? Yes, Sir, saith the Serton, pray thee open the Church door, said Jack, and toll the Bell, for I must preach here this afternoon; I will, Sir, said the Serton: so the poor man not perceiving who he was, went presently and opened the Church door (Jack following him) the people hearing the Bell toll, came to the Serton to know what the matter was, Jack sitting soberly in the Desk, with the great books before him: That Gentleman, said the Serton, is to preach this afternoon. With that the people made hast to the Church, and when Jack saw a good number of them, he pluckt off his Hat, and turned over the Leaves first of one book, and then the other, for a little space, and then gets him up into the Pulpit very devoutly, and knees down as though he would pray, the people wondering all this while that the Parson did not read nor pray while he

Of John Frank.

he was in the Desk, they fixed their eyes upon him, and gave attention to him; what they should hear from the pulpit. Jack as he kneeled, mumbled to himself, and lifted up his eyes, still waiting to hear the Prayer: Jack rises up, & having a Common-prayer-book in his hand, he opens it, and turning over the leavedes, he speaks thus to them: Beloved, saith he, my Text is in the four and fortieth Chapter of St. John and the hundred Verse: then shutting the book again, he begins to preach, as he call'd it, speaking such gibberish and nonsense as did amaze the people: some turned over the leavedes of their books backward and forward to find the Text, others listened to hear what he said, some thought that he had spoken Latin & Greek, that they could not understand; thus for a little time they expected, but at length they found themselves deceived, and that it was the Fool, which all had known but for his black Cloaths. So they went all home much ashamed to see themselves beguiled by a Fool: Jack was very proud that he had preach'd, and went to his Masters house, where every one was joy'd, for they wonder'd what was become

The mad Conceits
come of him, but when they heard
what he had done, they laughed heartily.

How Jack deceived Mr. Sorrel, a Rich
Yeoman of Puddings and Links, which
hung up in the Chimney.

JACK was often upon the ramble, and
one day he went to this Yeomans
House, who loved much to make sport
with him: the Servants being all bu-
sie, some in the Barn, and some abroad
among the Cattel, there was none but
he and the Fool all alone. Mr. Sorrel
says Jack, sha'l us play at Blindmans-
buff; ay, saith he, with all my heart. Jack,
you shall be blinded, says Jack, that I
will, Jack, saith he; so pinning a Nap-
kin about his Head and Eyes, now
turn about says Jack; but you see Mr.
Sorrel, you see no good saith Jack, saith he,
I do not see: Jack shuffled up and down
the Kitchin also for to catch him, and
still cry'd, you see Mr. Sorrel, you see;
but when the Fool perceived indeed
that he did not see, he went to the
Chimney, and whipt down some of the
Puddings into his Pockets, and so he
did till as he came to that end of the
room, till he had filled both his Pock-
ets and Breeches with them; which
was

Of John Frank.

was soon done, though they were large, for he was very quick. The doors being open, Jack runs away so fast as he could, leading the good man behind, who wondering that he did not hear the Fool, cryed out, Jack, Jack, but finding no answer, he pull'd off the Wapkin, and saw the Fool was gone, & that he had taken many of his Links and Puddings with him, he was so enraged, that he sent his Blood-Hound after him, which when Jack did perceive that the Dog came after him, he took a Pudding and flung to the Dog: the Dog smelling to the Pudding, Jack gained ground the while, and still as the Dog followed him he threw a pudding back, and so he did till he had got into a House.

This was soon spread abroad to the great shame and veration of the honest man, that he could not endure to hear of it.

It fortun'd long time after that Mr. Sorrel among other Tenants did go to pay his duty and respects to the Lord where Jack then lived: Jack espying him, went up and told his Lady, that Mr. Sorrel was come: the Lady being afraid that the Fool should offend him by

The mad Conceits
by speaking of the Puddings, threat-
ning him saying, Sirrah, if you speak one
word of the Pudding, you shall be Whipt:
No, says Jack, I will not.

But when the Lord and Lady was at
Dinner, and Mr. Sorrel and the rest with
them, Jack goes to Mr. Sorrel, & shakes
him by the hand, saying, how do you do
Mr. Sorrel, how do you? then whisper-
ing as it were to him, but so loud that
all the company did hear him; Mr.
Sorrel, says Jack, not a word of the Pud-
ding, Mr. Sorrel: at which they all
could not forbear laughing, but the
good man was so much ashamed, that
the company were sorry to see, and ne-
ver came there no more. Ever since it
is a by word to say (not a word of the
Pudding.)

How Jack served a Gentleman who had a
great Nose.

There was a Gentleman who came
often to this Lords Table, who
had a very great Nose, which every one
took notice of, and in his absence would
speak of him: Jack hearing them he
would also be talking of the great nose.
Now fearing lest he should speak of
it at any time to the Gentleman, he
was

Of John Frank.

was soundly chidden for prating, so that they thought he would not dare to mention it any more. But one day this Gentleman being there at Dinner, Jack darts by him (and peeping in his face) calls to the Lord and Lady, saying, do you hear my Lord? do you hear Madam? do you see this Gentleman here, he has no nose at all: at which every one laughed heartily, but the Gentleman was much ashamed.

How Jack hired a Servant to dwell with him.

JACK having borrowed a Scarlet Cloak, a fine laced Band, and a good hat, ~~he puts them on~~ throwing his Cloak over one shoulder, so that it quite hid his Calve-skins, and goes into the Park, where many people passed thro' upon sufferance, and there Jack walks up and down very proudly. There comes a poor man to him begging (thinking he had been some brave Gentleman) I will give you nothing, says Jack, why don't you go to work; so I would, Sir, saith the poor man, if I could get any: why do you not go to Service, saith Jack? If it please you, Sir, I cannot tell where to

The mad Conceits

to get a Service, what can you do, saith Jack? I can do any thing, answered the man, can you pump Water, and carry Wood, and wash Bucks, says Jack: Yes, Sir, says the beggar, that's well, says Jack, what Wages must I give you? what you please Sir, said the beggar: then said Jack, I'll give you three pound a year, I thank your Worship, said he; Come home with me, said the Fool; so Jack, comes home to his Lords House, the Man follows him, and there he sets him down in the Porch, and asks the Man divers Questions; at last comes the Lords Steward, and hearing Jack call to the Man, and ordering him his business, stands a while to hear, then steps to Jack, saying, What now Jack, have you hired a servant this Morning? yes, says the Fool, shaking his Ears and laughing; the poor man then perceiving that he was deceived, he did not know which way to look; but however, though he were mistaken in his Master, yet he obtained a bountiful Alms from the Lord, who with the rest of the Family were very much pleas'd with the conceit of the Fool.

Of John Franks.

How Jack complained of Mary Dover, she would not make him clean, when having taken Physick; he had bewrayed himself.

There was also in this Lords House a Woman Fool, whose name was Mary Dover, and she was imployed by every one to do all the meanest Offices. Jack too always a delight to take all, of any kind of Physick he could get; one of the family had one day given him a purge to take, his Wife (as he did call her) being the Landys Maid, called him to his usual work to beat the buck, poor Jack pull'd off his Doublet, as at other times, and stood beating the Linnen till he bewrayed himself, so that it ran down to his heels: the Fool finding his breeches and stockings in such a case, fell a crying aloud, and stamping for Mary Dover, to make him clean, but she refusing to do it, he comes crying into the Parlor, in this witten condition. where his Lady sat at Supper, complaining to her, that he had taken Physick, and Mary Dover would not make him clean; the Lady with the rest of the company could not sit at the Table for the stink, yet could

The mad Conceits

not forbear laughing to see him so surprized, and crying so grievously, but his presence at that time not to be endured, she commanded one of the Servants to lead him forth the room, and to cause Mary Dover to do that office, for none else would clean him; and then he came in again and made very good sport. The poor fool being very hungry after his physick, every one gave him some meat, which he did eat so greedily as though he would choke himself: they ever and anon would ask him questions, and his mouth was so full he could not speak, and his Chaps so greasie, as if they had been in a dripping pan: When he had eaten pretty well, he wanted some drink, which was given him, good Ale; and then Jack's tongue began to run freely, making many pretty Jestes by chance, for he could not do it otherwise.

How Jack in his rambles went into an Inn at Witsford Bridge, and how he served the people of the House.

Jack having rambled about till he was very hungry, went into an Inn at Witsford Bridge, and asked his host what he should have for his Supper: the host knew that he was such a Lusty Fool,

Of John Frank.

Fool, thought he had money, offered him a good Breast of Sutton, which was then ready roasted, of which Jack was very glad, for he loved fat meat very well, so a Napkin being laid, and bread and drink brought, he sat down soberly, to eat and drink. and when he had eaten all, he asked what was to pay: they told him two and twenty pence for meat and drink: well, said he (pulling out two halfs farthings) here, said he, pay your self, & give me thy rest again. they laughing, asking him for more money, but he told them he had no more, nor indeed he had not, nor did he know brass from gold or silver, so they let him go quietly.

How Jack served a Justice of Peace that jested with him.

A Justice of Peace being one day at this Lords Table, who loved to jest with every one; Jack being in the room to make sport and having then a new Calves skin suit on, red and white spotted, & a young puppy in his arms, much of the same colour of his suit, said to the Justice, jogging him; is not this puppy like me; the Justice turns him aside to Jack, saying, Jack, it is very like thee; now

The mad Conceits

there is 2 puppies Jack, ha, ha, ha, saith Jack, and so he goes with his puppy down stairs, for he could not eat while that was under his arm; presently after he came again into the dining room, and knocking the Justice on the back with his fist, the Justice turning him about to Jack, looked a little angry: how is it Justice, says Jack, are you angry? shake hands and be friends, the Justice gave him his hand, which Jack shook with both his hands, saying aloud and laughing. now there is two fools, Justice two fools, two fools, at which they all laught heartily, to see this great wit affronted by a fool, especially one Gentleman of quality, who but a few minutes before this Justice had abused by jesting; for he was of that temper that he would Jest, but never take none. It is not good to play with edged tools, Neither is it good to jest too much with fools

Here follows many pritty Sayings and jests of Jack, which are very witty and worth observing.

Jack's Lord and Lady going forth one day in the Coach, Jack had obtained the favour to run by the Coach side, and upon the way they met another Lords Coach,

Of John Frank.

Coach, whose Gentleman riding by the Coach, and seeing Jack, puts off his hat in derision, and bows himself, saying, I pray whose fool are you? The fool presently pulls off his Calve-skin Cap, and shakes his Ears, saying, I am my Lord M's fool: pray whose fool are you? The Gentleman being thus answered was much ashamed, and rode away, and Jack went his way.

Jack standing by one time where some Gentlemen were talking, and hearing 'em talk of Round-heads, Round-heads said Jack to himself, ay, Jack, said one of them, what's a round-head? (now this Gentleman who askt him was a round-head, but would not be thought one.) what's a round-head, says Jack, a round-head is one that has no wit at all; give me your hand, Sir, says Jack; the Gentleman did so, ha, ha, ha, and shook it, saying, there I mumpt you: the rest laughed, he laughed, though he were vexed.

One Night his Lady being at Supper, Jack came into the room, bawling aloud, that he could not get the Coachman to buy him a Chamber-pot: Madam, saith he, the Coachman wont buy me a pot, and I am faine to rise in the night

The mad Conceits

night, to make water in the yard, in my shirt, and I have got a Cough, must I not have some Sugar-Candy Madam: the Lady laughed to think how reasonable he was in his request, but gave order to the Coach-man to buy him what he wanted.

In the time of the Ladies Lying-In, Jack found that he carried up more wood than at other times to the Chamber Door, he having his Arms full of wood, throws it down, making a great noise therewith, saying to himself aloud, Pox take my Lady, I think she burns more wood then her body is worth.

One time Jack coming late to dinner in the Hall, and seeing, there was no room for him at the table, he runs forth, and comes presently in again, saying, do you hear Sirs, the King is come into the back yard, with his Coach and six Horses, and a great many men; they not knowing what to think, ran all out to see; in the meantime Jack sets him down and carves for himself, they coming into the yard could see no body there, but laughed to think how the Fool had out-witted them.

He being asked one day what would become of him when he was dead, I shall

Of John Frank.

shall lye in the ground, saith he, till
Gods Trumpet sounds. and then shall
I rise again and go into Heav'n. I, but
what will you say, said one to him, when
Gods Trumpet sounds to call you be-
fore him? he answered, God will not re-
quire more then he hath given me:
which words so unexpected, did much a-
mize all that heard him.

He was duily morning and evening at
prayers in the Chappel, though he had
noundersa.d.ng, and every night in
his Chamber, he would pray thus by
himself.

Lord, said he, thou knowest I can do
nothing of my self, Lord thou knowest
I can do nothing; Lord have mercy up-
on me, and help me.

He lived till about fourscore years,
and died in a lights house in E. field
Parish where he was handsomely bu-
ried, all that knew him being very sorry
for his death (poor innocent soul) who
did no evil, than by evil examples.

There might be more said of him, but
that may serve for a second part: these
stories I hope will be the more plea-
sing, because they are true.

The

The Contents.

1. How **Jack** went to market with his Masters Caterer, and how he sold a Basket of Fish for a Mag-Pye.
2. How **Jack** and the Taylor lay together, and how **Jack** one morning was found set on stride a great high beam in the Chamber, and the Taylor found dead in his bead, with his neck broke.
3. How **Jack** was accused by a Wench to be the father of her Child.
4. How **Jack** deceived a Sexton, and got into a Church to preach.
5. How **Jack** deceived Mr. **Sorel** a rich Yeoman, of Puddings and Links which hung up in his Chimney.
6. How **Jack** served a Gentleman who had a great Nose.
7. How **Jack** hired a Servant to dwell with him.
8. How **Jack** complained of **Mary Do** her she would not make him clean, when he had bewrayed himself.
9. How **Jack** in his rambles went to **Wilt** ford-Bridge, and how he served the people of the House.
10. How **Jack** served a Justice of the Peace who jested with him.

F F M S.

Ma-
ket

her
und
the
d in

i to

get

rich
nich

who

wit

Do
her

lit
peo

era